

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1632

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OAS, GY
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER URGES GUYANA'S ADMISSION TO OAS

BEGIN SUMMARY: GUYANA'S FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS HAS RAISED AGAIN THE ISSUE OF ARTICLE 8 OF THE OAS CHARTER AND STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT EXCLUSION FROM THE OAS WAS NOT ONLY FRUSTRATING BUT HAD A RADICALIZING EFFECT ON GUYANA. WHILE NOT ALL GUYANESE CARE WHETHER GUYANA JOINS THE OAS, WILLS ASSERTED THAT OAS MEMBERSHIP WOULD DRAW GUYANA CLOSER TO WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS AND BE A MODERATING INFLUENCE. HE BELIEVES TIMING, I.E. ACTION THIS YEAR, IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE 1978 WILL BE AN ELECTION YEAR IN VENEZUELA AND THE GOV WOULD BECOME MORE OF AN OBSTACLE TO GUYANA'S ADMISSION THAN IT IS NOW. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A MEETING WITH ME ON JULY 18, FONMIN WILLS SPOKE OF HIS FRUSTRATION OVER GUYANA'S BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE OAS. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD A RUMOR THAT A DEAL WOULD BE MADE TO ENABLE CUBA TO ENTER THE OAS. WHILE
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GUYANA HAD NOTHING AGAINST SUCH AN ACCOMODATION WITH CUBA, THE IDEA WAS FRUSTRATING FOR GUYANA WHICH REMAINED BARRED FROM THE OAS.

2. WILLS WENT ON AT LENGTH ABOUT HOW GALLING IT WAS FOR GUYANA TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE OAS. THIS WAS ONE OF THE REASONS, HE SAID, THAT PRIME MINISTER

BURNHAM HAD BELIEF THAT GUYANA WAS AN OUTCAST IN THE HEMISPHERE. CONSEQUENTLY, GUYANA DIRECTED ITS ENERGIES TOWARD OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. I REMINDED WILLS THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD PUBLICLY SPOKE IN FAVOR OF REMOVAL OF ARTICLE 8 FROM THE OAS CHARTER WHICH IF DONE WOULD REMOVE THE OBSTACLE TO GUYANA'S ADMISSION. WILLS REPLIED THAT HE KNEW THAT, BUT SOME GUYANESE POLITICIANS SUSPECTED THAT THIS WAS MERELY A PLOY AND THAT IN REALITY THE US WOULD NOT PRESS FOR REMOVAL OF THE ARTICLE. THEY SUSPECTED US TACITLY COOPERATED WITH VENEZUELA IN KEEPING GUYANA OUT OF THE OAS.

3. WILLS' VERSION OF VENEZUELA'S INTENTIONS WAS THAT VENEZUELA WOULD CONTINUE OPPOSING GUYANA'S ENTRY INTO THE OAS UNTIL GUYANA AGREED TO GIVE UP SOME TERRITORY ALONG ITS BORDER TO SATISFY VENEZUELA'S CLAIM. THE GOG DID NOT PUBLICLY SHOW MUCH INTEREST IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE OAS BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD LET THE VENEZUELANS KNOW THAT THEIR TACTIC DID IN FACT GENERATE PRESSURE.

4. WILLS URGED THAT THE US TRY TO GET THE MATTER RESOLVED THIS YEAR. PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WAS MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD GUYANA THAN WOULD BE ANY CONCEIVABLE SUCCESSOR. IF THE MATTER DRIFTED
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UNTIL 1978, THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WOULD FORCE PEREZ TO TAKE A HARDER LINE IN OPPOSITION TO GUYANA THAN HE WOULD AT PRESENT. WILLS CONCLUDED THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT MEMBERSHIP IN THE OAS WOULD FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE US HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON GUYANA'S FOREIGN POLICIES BY ORIENTING GUYANA CLOSER TO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND REMOVING THE FEELING THAT GUYANA IS AN OUTCAST.

5. COMMENT: RADICAL GUYANESE POLITICIANS IN THE RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) DO NOT SHARE WILL'S DESIRE FOR GUYANA TO ACQUIRE OAS MEMBERSHIP. PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM IS TOO EGOISTIC TO PRESS THE IDEA, AND THE OPPOSITION PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) CAN BE EXPECTED TO OPPOSE GUYANA'S MEMBERSHIP. BURNHAM, HOWEVER, WOULD WELCOME OAS MEMBERSHIP IF THE DOOR WERE OPENED. I SHARE WILLS' ANALYSIS THAT OAS AFFILIATION WOULD TEND TO ENVELOP GUYANA INTO WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, DIMINISH THE LEVEL OF HER ACTIVITY IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND MODERATE HER INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR.

6. I REQUEST THAT DEPARTMENT PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROSPECTS FOR ELIMINATION OF ARTICLE 8 AND GUYANA'S ENTRY TO THE OAS. IF THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT SHOULD NOT BE PASSED TO WILLS, PLEASE SO INDICATE.
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Message Attributes

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